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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Navy Intercepts Ballistic Missile Target in Fleet Exercise Pacific Blitz**

PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY, KAUAI, HAWAII – Vice Adm. Samuel J. Locklear, Commander, U.S. Third Fleet announced today the successful Navy intercept of a ballistic missile target over the Pacific Ocean during Fleet Exercise Pacific Blitz. This was the first Fleet operational firing to employ the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) against a ballistic missile target. Command and control of this mission resided with Commander, U.S. Third Fleet, based in San Diego, Calif.

Pearl Harbor-based Aegis destroyers, USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) and USS Hopper (DDG 70), which have been upgraded to engage ballistic missiles, fired SM-3 missiles at separate targets. During this event, a short-range ballistic missile target was launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), Barking Sands, Kauai, Hawaii. Upon detecting and tracking the target, USS Paul Hamilton, launched a SM-3 missile, resulting in a direct-hit intercept. Following USS Paul Hamilton's engagement, PMRF launched another target. USS Hopper successfully detected, tracked and engaged the target. The SM-3 followed a nominal trajectory, however intercept was not achieved. Extensive analysis of the flight mission will be used to improve the deployed Aegis BMD system. The Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) flight record is 16 of 19 intercepts.

“The successful engagement of ballistic missile targets from ships at sea is extraordinary,” Locklear said. “Pacific Blitz highlights the successful transition from developmental test flights to operational fleet execution and demonstrates the viability of the Maritime BMD Concept of Operations.”

Ballistic Missile Defense is a Navy core mission and a key warfighting capability for the U.S. Maritime Strategy, which calls for credible combat power to be continuously postured to protect America's vital interests. BMD provides the ability to use international waters to defend against established and emergent threats, which underlies the importance of free and lawful use of the seas.

“Hitting a bullet with a bullet” is a phrase often used to explain the complex engineering challenge of conducting a direct hit of a ballistic missile with a closing rate of thousands of miles per hour. Such an intercept capability is referred to as “hit-to-kill.” The missile collides with the target, destroying the target with the sheer force of impact. The energy released from the impact is equivalent to the force released when a ten ton truck traveling at 600 miles per hour hits a wall.

## (Continued)

Video for this event will be available on Media Lighthouse at approximately 7 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time (1 a.m. Sunday Eastern Time). Access to the site is <http://mlh.donhq.navy.mil>. Credentialed media should email [navyvisualnews@navy.mil](mailto:navyvisualnews@navy.mil) for an account.

For further information, contact Commander, U.S. Third Fleet Public Affairs at (619) 884-2820 or (808) 482-0036.

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